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Progress report on innovative sources of development finance

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to the request to the Secretary-General in paragraph 51 of the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development (see A/CONF.212/7), the present document presents a progress report on the issue of innovative sources of development finance, taking into account all existing initiatives.

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I. Introduction

1. The Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development[1] recognized "the value of exploring innovative sources of finance" (para. 44) and sparked what has become a far-ranging effort to pilot and implement a variety of new mechanisms, mobilizing countries of different levels of development to meet internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. In March 2008, the Secretary-General noted that the "post-Monterrey period has seen a flourishing phase in the number and variety of new initiatives for financing development. In the context of a new spirit of partnership between developed and developing countries, various groupings have explored together innovative ways of raising financing for development. This partnership 'modality' could increasingly become the distinguishing feature of the exploring and implementing of new initiatives for financing development" (E/2008/7, para. 1). In the midst of a global financial and economic crisis, it is important to continue to support efforts in this new modality of international development cooperation in the light of the creativity that has been unleashed building on the consensus for enhanced cooperation in the revenue-raising side and the potential for large-scale funding that could be generated. The features of this approach also have a potentially important role to play in addressing the issue of providing global public goods, including, for example, addressing the challenge of climate change.

2. The first concrete outcome in the innovative financing framework came with the publication of the Landau Commission Report on Innovative Development Funding Solutions in 2004. On that occasion, the Presidents of France and Brazil made a joint declaration on "Action against Hunger and Poverty" at the United Nations. The report called for partnership between developing and developed countries to address the challenges and risks common to humanity as a whole. It identified the feasibility of new financial sources such as solidarity levies and market-based mechanisms which could be coordinated internationally, but implemented at a national level. In 2005, at the United Nations, the Declaration on Innovative Sources of Financing for Development was endorsed by 79 Heads of State. This high-level declaration has been regularly readdressed, at the call of the Leading Group on Solidarity Levies to Fund Development, which was renamed in May 2009 as the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development (hereinafter referred to as "the Leading Group"), during the General Assembly sessions.

3. The pilot phase is now completed. Several mechanisms are in place and new ones are being planned beyond the initial activities in the health sector. Innovative sources to fund development today include a wide range of different types of mechanisms. They are not limited to taxes, but include voluntary contributions, market-based mechanisms, and loans guarantees as well as levies. They are characterized by being stable, long-term and complementary to official public aid and oriented towards widening the sharing of the benefits of globalization.

4. New actors have also emerged. The topic of innovative financing has received considerable international attention, in particular through the work conducted by the

[1] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

High-Level Task Force on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems, as well as the Leading Group. The Leading Group, bringing together countries, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, serves as a federating platform for different initiatives and new ideas. Indeed, this new framework has strengthened international solidarity while seeking to correct the negative effects of globalization and market inefficiencies and facilitating international cooperation in an unprecedented manner. Innovative financing is in the avant-garde of rethinking international development cooperation. A High-Level Task Force has been created to explore and recommend actions to allow the strengthening of international assistance during this time of crisis. Social sector investments need to be protected regardless of economic fluctuations. The Task Force on Innovative International Financing, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the World Bank President, made recommendations at the sixth plenary meeting of the Leading Group in Paris on 29 May, to raise additional funds for 100 million of the world's most vulnerable people, who remain trapped in poverty as a result of the food crisis that preceded the economic downturn. Following upon the high-level prominence provided to the topic of innovative finance through the High-Level Task Force for Innovative International Finance for Health Systems, and the Leading Group, the I-8 Group/L.I.F.E. (Leading Innovative Financing for Equity) has recently been created to promote innovative finance even further.[2] The Group is closely linked to the work of the United Nations. Its purpose is to bring together the most promising existing innovative finance initiatives in order to share experiences, to work on one common set of messages to reinforce the current initiative from the High-Level Task Force for Innovative International Finance for Health Systems and the Leading Group, to prepare the ground for new initiatives, and to coordinate the channelling of funds in order to achieve maximum impact on the ground. This is particularly relevant, as it is part of an overall debate on the evolving health architecture and the need to reduce transactions costs.

5. *Solidarity as a basis for international cooperation in raising resources.* A key feature of the innovative financing for development framework is human solidarity. The aim of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is shared by the international community as a whole. The innovative source of financing framework has encouraged both developed and developing countries to propose and implement new financing mechanisms jointly in an unprecedented way. The innovative financing for development framework has a strong element of partnership, joint design and decision-making between developing and developed countries in raising resources, whereas the traditional financing approach has emphasized partnership only in the use of the resource. Thus, it is a key feature that mechanisms such as an air-ticket levy continue to be implemented both in developed and developing countries around the world.

6. This feature can also be seen in the new partnerships emerging from innovative financing frameworks, of which the Leading Group is an example. As other countries joined the effort with their own funding mechanism proposals, a

[2] The 8 Mechanisms of I-8 are: the International Finance Facility for Immunization, created to support the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, UNITAID, the Advance Market Commitments for vaccines, the "Debt2Health" initiative of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, (PRODUCT) RED, the Responsible Social Investment initiative of the Agence Française de Développement, the use of revenues from the Carbon Market and the Millennium Foundation for Innovative Finance for Health.

wide range of creative ideas have emerged. The original innovative source of development financing example in paragraph 44 of the Monterrey Consensus of "special drawing rights allocations for development purposes"[1] already carries the feature of cooperation in the revenue-raising side of development finance. The project pioneered by Norway on the impact of illicit capital flows on development, which has the potential of making available resources almost 10 times the level of official development assistance (ODA) for development, also satisfies this feature.

7. *Predictability and long-term sustainability*. The volatility of ODA flows has long been a weakness of the international aid system. One of the characteristics of innovative financing mechanisms is that they help to enhance predictability of funding. For example, international levies collected on air travel and directed towards an agreed identified purpose do not depend on political processes in the donor countries. This would also be true of other proposed initiatives, such as the proposed "currency transaction levy". Internationally concerted and coordinated national action to collect resources for a commonly agreed purpose is a key innovation. The levies can be derived from activities that have a shared international impact and worldwide activities benefiting from globalization, such as air travel or exchange rate transactions. This approach, therefore, provides a way to identify long-term funding for development purposes.

8. *Addressing market failures*. Another important feature of innovative financing is that of addressing so-called market failures. Beyond the International Finance Facility for Immunization, there are now many proposals, particularly related to climate change mitigation, that may become quantitatively significant in the future. The provision of, and funding for research in, medicines for tropical diseases are underserved by the private sector because of its emphasis on short-term returns. By coming together internationally and generating the needed funding through the issuance of bonds producing a reasonable return, the time-inconsistency market-failure (whereby an outcome is not the best one in the long term even though the market suggests that it is in the short term) is solved innovatively.

9. *Broader participation beyond national Governments*. The innovative financing for development framework has mobilized participation in the international funding effort beyond national Governments and has drawn in subnational governments, private actors and private citizens. Municipalities, local governments, private foundations and international organizations also participate significantly in many projects under the framework of innovative sources of financing development.

10. The original impetus for this expanding and appealing financing framework emerged from the realization that in order to meet the goals set out at the United Nations Millennium Summit by 2015, the level of ODA would have to double. The aforementioned Monterrey Consensus urged all developed countries to take concrete actions to achieve ODA funding levels to 0.7 of their gross national product (GNP). Since 2002, there have been significant shortfalls to meet these goals. Under the Monterrey framework, there is a general agreement that the expansion of innovative finance does not relieve developed countries of their ODA responsibilities. The positive contribution that the innovative financing for development framework can contribute is in the building up of international solidarity through concrete actions consistent with the enormous generation of political will needed to meet ODA commitments. With the global community facing the urgent imperative of climate

change, the kind of solidarity which innovative financing for development exemplifies is more critical than ever.

11. It is an opportune time to consolidate efforts to deepen analytical work on innovative financing and sustain international mobilization and awareness. The Leading Group has become a key platform for the exchange of ideas on innovative financing. This initiative has brought together representatives from 55 member countries from all over the world, international organizations and civil society, widening considerably the coordination of all efforts related to innovative financing.

II. Mechanisms of innovative development financing in operation

12. Since the Monterrey Conference, international development assistance has seen significant diversification in the set of instruments, often referred to as "innovative sources of finance" based on a better understanding of the challenges and risks faced by developing countries, addressing obstacles identified, with a view to achieving specific development impacts.

13. The concept of innovations now extends to such diverse forms as thematic global trust funds, public guarantees and insurance mechanisms, cooperative international fiscal mechanisms, equity investments, growth-indexed bonds, counter-cyclical loans, distribution systems for global environmental services, microfinance and mesofinance, and so on. Tailoring these instruments to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of developing countries and well-identified market inefficiencies remains one of the ongoing challenges of development finance. Much progress has been made in terms of both practical accomplishments and international mobilization since then and innovative sources of financing for development have been recognized at the highest level in a number of multiparty declarations.

14. The exploration and piloting of innovative sources of development financing and their promotion since the Monterrey Conference have largely been conducted within the framework of rapidly growing groups of countries. In October 2003, the President of France appointed a working group on new international financial contributions, whose report was published in September 2004. In January 2004, the President of France, together with the Presidents of Brazil and Chile and with the cooperation of the Secretary-General, launched a technical group on innovating financing mechanisms, the Group on Action against Hunger and Poverty, with Spain, Germany and Algeria joining them later. On 20 September 2004, at the meeting of Heads of State and Government in New York, the Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty was supported by 107 countries.

15. At the 2005 World Summit, the Heads of State and Government in New York joined the ongoing international efforts, with 79 countries endorsing the Declaration on Innovative Sources of Financing for Development, co-sponsored by Algeria, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany and Spain.

16. Another meeting was convened by the President of France in Paris, from 28 February to 1 March 2006, at which a second, more numerous group, the Leading Group on Solidarity Levies to Fund Development, was launched, establishing the first institutionalized international framework for practical action. The objective of

the Leading Group was to harness support from the international community, first, for the levy on airplane tickets, implemented in France in July 2006, and, second, to continue to explore and promote similar solidarity levies, as well as other possible innovative sources of finance. A total of 44 countries joined the Leading Group and 17 signalled their intention to introduce an air-ticket solidarity levy at the Paris Conference. Now it brings together 55 member countries and 3 observer countries, as well as major international organizations, including the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and non-governmental organizations. The Leading Group has a permanent secretariat in Paris and a six-month-rotating presidency, which has been held by Brazil, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Guinea and France. Plenary meetings have been held in Brasilia, Oslo, Seoul, Dakar and Conakry, with the most recent one held in Paris in May 2009.

17. The activities undertaken by the Leading Group (or the Pilot Group, as it is also known by translation from the French) have made it possible to identify several families of initiatives: solidarity levies on globalized activities, implemented at the national level but within a framework of international coordination, pre-financing mechanisms based on financial markets, but backed by public guarantees or support, facilitation by public authorities of voluntary private sector contributions through tax incentives and technical facilitation, and more generally, instruments that can generate extra resources over and above those from official aid and the market. Concrete innovative sources of finance so far explored under its aegis include currency transaction taxes, taxes on arms trade, taxes on carbon emissions, an International Financial Facility, advance market commitments, "solidarity levies" on items such as international airplane tickets, enhanced efforts to combat tax evasion and illicit financial transfers, and a world lottery.

18. Today a series of initiatives have moved from discussion to reality. Since 2006, several mechanisms have been piloted and already proved their effectiveness, particularly in the field of health. The international initiative launched in the form of an international airline solidarity contribution was the first such mechanism. In 2006, the President of France and the then Foreign Minister, together with the President of Brazil, and the Governments of Chile, Norway and the United Kingdom, established a small levy on airline tickets, for which the combined contributions would help scale up access to life-saving HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria treatments, lower the prices of drugs and tests, and accelerate the pace at which they reach those in need. The levies on airline tickets, charged to passengers taking off from airports in the territories of the countries implementing the scheme, have had no measurable effect on air traffic and hence provide a stable source of finance. The contributions levied at the national level are then coordinated internationally for allocation, for the most part, to the UNITAID international drug-purchasing facility, which aims to reduce the cost of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS treatments through a mechanism that affects both demand and supply. By financing UNITAID, donors, which include States as well as the private foundations, give this global drug-purchasing authority considerable purchasing power, enabling it to negotiate 25 per cent to 50 per cent rebates on the price of drugs, including antiretroviral medicine, that are then dispatched across the world to countries that need them most. By guaranteeing sustainable and predictable revenues for the purchase of drugs, UNITAID also plays an important role in

influencing manufacturers, inducing them to invest in crucial research and development for drugs that otherwise would not be produced.

19. Levies on air tickets are estimated to generate 220 million euros annually worldwide and have enabled France to generate an extra 160 million euros in conventional aid so far. Since its inception, 29 Governments have joined France in contributing finances to UNITAID, which raises approximately $300 million every year — without negatively impacting the airline industry. UNITAID was officially launched at the General Assembly on 19 September 2006. A hosting agreement with WHO was also signed.

20. The promotion of the levy on air tickets remains a priority for the Leading Group, which launched a task force of African countries in Conakry to bring together the greatest possible number of States on the continent to implement this solidarity levy in accordance with their own characteristics.

21. Currently, its promoters are considering an additional concept: collecting very small amounts of money from the vast number of air travellers worldwide, on a strictly voluntary basis. This would be a breakthrough in three respects: first, the donation would not solely be based on developed country donors; second, its stability in time would not be based on binding contributions, but rather on the addition of a great number of small donations; third, Internet and automatic payment mechanisms would manage the system — thereby reducing collection costs to close to zero. Because similar initiatives are, first of all, likely to generate additional and much more predictable flows of resources, instrumental innovation is likely to evolve further down this highly promising path, in response to the emerging need for additional and predictable resources in many other areas. Furthermore, the goal of the Millennium Foundation, which was established in November 2008, is to develop and implement innovative finance mechanisms to support the three health-related Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Foundation for Innovative Finance for Health is currently developing this innovative fund-raising mechanism that will make it easy for everyone who travels to make a voluntary micro-donation to UNITAID, to help fight the severe health crisis of contagious diseases threatening the world's most vulnerable populations. The start-up capital of the Millennium Foundation was provided by UNITAID, which will be the principal recipient of funds mobilized. The Millennium Foundation is governed by a Board composed of representatives of donors and recipient Governments including France, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Chile and Norway, and representatives of African and Asian countries; representatives of non-governmental organizations specialized in HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and of communities living with diseases; and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

22. The International Finance Facility for Immunization was the next successful project. It was based on the International Financial Facility proposal initially made by the United Kingdom in 2003, which the United Nations Secretary-General called upon the international community to launch in 2005. Following the Monterrey Conference, the United Kingdom promoted the "big International Financial Facility" initiative for raising funds for the Millennium Development Goals. It is a hybrid approach combining both public and private sources in a creative financing model. The idea consisted in issuing bonds based on legally binding 10-to-20-year donor commitments. By front loading long-term aid flows, this resource-mobilization instrument seeks to lock in precious resources over a given period of time and

achieve a critical mass of funding to allow for quick progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

23. The International Finance Facility for Immunization was launched in January 2006. Spain, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation took part in the International Finance Facility for Immunization launch alongside France and the United Kingdom. They were joined by South Africa in March 2007 and talks are being held inviting other countries. This approach involves a large-scale pre-financing mechanism which is based on guaranteed bonds. Funds are raised by issuing bonds on the basis of donors' pledges, countries or private foundations. The bonds are issued regularly on the basis of the scheme drawn up when the pledges are signed and bought on financial markets. The flows of funds are predictable and stable and can be used directly for projects in the health sector.

24. Irrevocable sovereign financial commitments under the International Finance Facility for Immunization are structured as rising cash flows over 20 years, enabling it to carry an AAA rating. Donors have pledged close to €4 billion over 20 years to fund immunization programmes in developing countries. In effect, the 20-year government pledges are, after selling the bonds in the capital markets, converted into cash today. The first issuance in November 2006 raised $1 billion from a global benchmark bond and $220 million equivalent from a placement with Japanese retail investors in March 2008. In the world today, where financial leverage has been questioned, this is leverage of the most constructive form.

25. The International Finance Facility for Immunization aims to raise four times as much as the 2006 bond launch in capital markets over the next 10 years — enough to support the immunization of half a billion children through campaigns against measles, tetanus and yellow fever. The International Finance Facility for Immunization is expected to scale up spending by as much as $500 million annually up to 2015 through the issuance of $4 billion worth of floating bonds on capital markets to finance vaccination programmes via the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) Fund in 70 of the poorest countries in the world from 2006 to 2015.

26. GAVI manages the funds and allocates resources to immunization projects with a track record. The International Finance Facility for Immunization has truly transformed the capacity of GAVI, with all of the $1.2 billion raised in the last two years already disbursed in vaccination programmes. In 2007 alone, $862 million was disbursed to various immunization and health system improvement programmes, such as the pentavalent vaccine initiative. This could save more than 500 million children in the future. Other important interventions are also being carried out against measles, yellow fever, polio and tetanus contracted during births.

27. The third scheme known as the Advance Market Commitments, first proposed some years ago in academic circles, is a related approach that brings together market instruments and public financing. In 2005, Italy presented the Advance Market Commitment concept to its Group of 8 partners, in the context of funding health programmes as a crucial element in the fight against poverty. The first report (2005) on Advance Market Commitments generated a great deal of interest and the G-8 agreed to further explore its feasibility. A long, complex, preparatory process to translate the idea into reality started soon after, with the World Bank, the GAVI Alliance and UNICEF contributing to the process with technical expertise. The first technical meeting of the Advance Market Commitment took place in Rome in

September 2006, with the participation of G-8 countries, when a pilot project against pneumococcus, a lethal pneumonia-inducing bacteria which still kills 1.6 million people a year, most of them children, was agreed.

28. Advance Market Commitments seek to address the shortcomings of pharmaceutical markets, especially in the case of the poorest countries, by establishing contractual partnerships between donors and pharmaceutical firms to focus research into neglected diseases and distribute drugs at affordable prices. Under the Advance Market Commitment, government donors commit money to guarantee the price of vaccines once they have been developed, thus creating a viable future market. Advance Market Commitments also provide incentives for the development of a suitable vaccine for poor countries.

29. Italy's announcement that it would establish an Advance Market Commitment facility for a new pneumococcal vaccine was followed by pledges totalling $1.5 billion — the recommended size of the pilot Advance Market Commitment project for pneumococcal vaccines — on 9 February 2007 in Rome by six donors (Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, the Russian Federation and the Gates Foundation). Although a pneumococcal vaccine currently exists, it does not cover the major strains active in developing countries. If successful, accelerated introduction of pneumococcal vaccines should begin in 2010. This Advance Market Commitment is expected to spur investments by two or three multinational firms and by at least one firm in an emerging country to develop new vaccines, scale them up and license them, utilizing more efficient second-generation technologies for vaccine production tailored to the needs of developing countries. A consensus was also reached on the institutional structure of GAVI to host the Advance Market Commitment secretariat.

30. A fundamental threshold has been crossed with instruments such as GAVI and UNITAID. Both the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the GAVI Alliance now fund a growing proportion of their work from these sources. These pilot projects need to be scaled up to their full potential and this message was reaffirmed during the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals at the General Assembly in September 2008, in the Action against Hunger and Poverty Declaration on Innovative Sources of Financing for Development, with the launching of a high-level task force on innovative international finance for health systems.

31. Another innovative financing mechanism related to health, known as the Debt2Health was launched in Berlin on 26 September 2007. This initiative of the Global Fund was conceived to help relieve the strain on resources of developing countries by converting portions of their old debt claims into new domestic resources for health. Under individually negotiated agreements, creditors relinquish a part of their rights to repayment of loans on the condition that the beneficiary country invests the freed-up resources into approved Global Fund programmes.

32. Germany was the first "champion" creditor in Debt2Health, committing to make available €200 million from debt-to-health conversions by 2010. The first swap agreement was also signed between Germany and Indonesia on the occasion of the global launch of Debt2Health for €50 million to finance urgent and lifesaving investments in HIV services and public health interventions using Global Fund systems. Another Debt2Health swap was concluded between Germany and Pakistan for €40 million at the International Conference on Financing for Development in

Doha in November 2008. Additional agreements are under discussion, including the conversion of AUS$ 75 million of Indonesian commercial export credit debt. Based on the current Debt2Health negotiations, debt swaps will have generated an additional US$ 450 million by 2010 to fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, and prospects for a doubling of volume by 2015 are good with additional creditors and debt-distressed countries joining the programme.

33. Another kind of innovation that aims for systemic impacts in the area of climate change is the set of taxation instruments that are currently under investigation. Carbon saturation and the depletion of fossil fuels — two of the planet's major environmental challenges — remain insufficiently incorporated in the pricing system. Despite its rise over the last few decades, the price of fossil fuels is still too low and too volatile to change private choices. Carbon taxes can help induce systemic changes by increasing the cost of emission. In its new "energy and climate package", the European Union introduced a bidding mechanism for carbon dioxide emission rights. The proceeds will be distributed to member States, with the proviso that a minimum of 20 per cent of them will be applied to policies in favour of renewable energies. Other regional groupings can subsequently join or undertake similar arrangements.

34. International collective action will be critical in mobilizing an effective, efficient and equitable response on the scale required to face the climate change challenge. The European Union climate and energy package intends to contribute towards financing actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in particular through the carbon market in the context of a wider international agreement for achieving, as the European Council underlines, the strategic objective of limiting the global average temperature increase to not more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. In this context, an international energy investment strategy is a critical component of climate change efforts. As the European Council noted, member States will determine, in accordance with their respective constitutional and budgetary requirements, the use of revenues generated from the auctioning of allowances in the European Union emissions trading system. Members expressed willingness to use at least half of this amount for actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate and adapt to climate change, avoid deforestation, develop renewable energies and improve energy efficiency as well as to promote other technologies contributing to the transition to a safe and sustainable low-carbon economy, including through capacity-building, technology transfers, research and development. Part of the funds generated could be applied to enabling and financing mitigation and adaptation to climate change in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries, within the framework that might emerge from the Copenhagen conference at the end of 2009.

35. "Payment for environmental services" is another example of an innovative scheme devised to channel resources to those delivering desired public good programmes. Some of these schemes are already operational locally in different areas of the world, on a variety of environmental services. They allow consumers of a public good to compensate for part of the costs borne by those in charge of producing or preserving it. For instance, downstream users of water cleansed by an upstream forest can pay those who manage the forest to ensure a sustainable flow of this service into the future. It can be envisaged that similar instruments could pay for the provision of global environmental services, such as the preservation of rainforests by countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia or

Brazil. The Clean Development Mechanisms arrangement under the Kyoto Protocol is a similar arrangement that allows industrialized countries or their businesses with greenhouse gas reduction commitments to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries as an alternative to more expensive emission reductions in their own countries.

36. Looking ahead, the Doha call to Governments for the next six years is to continue to innovate in development finance. Governments need to find creative ways to harness private capital markets. Of six notable financial innovations created so far, two — the Advanced Market Commitment and Debt2Health — are ultimately funded from public sector sources. Three approaches are notably derived from private sector commercial flows. The air-ticket levy is applied to travellers' airfares. Revenues from trading carbon dioxide emission permits in Germany come from industry, a financial transfer from a "public bad" to a "public good". These private sector mechanisms, some mandatory, some voluntary, represent real additionality. With budget support, thematic trust funds and programmes, such as payment for environmental services and Clean Development Mechanisms, are just a few of the new tools that have been designed to finance long-term, recurrent collaborative efforts between industrialized and developing nations. Similar to resource-mobilization schemes, it is likely that most of these products will continue to coexist and form part of this emerging global public policy.

37. From the outset, the Leading Group has paid attention to illegal financial flows from developing countries. At its plenary meeting in Seoul in September 2007, it asked Norway to lead an international task force to assess the scale of such flows and their impact on development, to clarify the existing legal framework and the obstacles to its effectiveness, to identify the actors in the phenomenon and their modus operandi and to identify possible partners and additional policy tools. As noted in the Conakry Declaration of November 2008, "substantial amounts of funds that could have contributed to development disappear through tax evasion and other illegal means, both in the North and in the South". This global problem is particularly serious in the least developed countries, depriving them of resources essential for the financing of public services and investments.

38. In this connection, the Leading Group underlined the direct link between illicit flows and the financing of development, and set the goal to ensure that a fair share of the world's resources are made available to its poorest people, especially in developing countries. It was also decided that the task force work with new partners through a new Global Task Force in the Global Financial Integrity programme, under the direction of Norway and the Leading Group, and with the participation of other interested countries and civil society organizations. The first meeting of the new task force was held in Washington in January 2009 when the Leading Group set out its priorities for a number of forthcoming international meetings.

39. The Leading Group also supports the principle of digital solidarity, initially promoted by Senegal. The so-called 1 per cent solidarity levy to finance the Digital Solidarity Fund aims at overcoming the digital gap between developed and developing countries, a major obstacle to development,. This mechanism would be based on a voluntary commitment by any public or private institution to introduce such criteria in their invitations for tender on public contracts concluded in the information technology sector. The World Conference on Digital Solidarity, which took place in Lyon, France, on 24 November 2008, noted the pioneering character of

the Act passed by the Parliament of Senegal in 2008 setting up such a voluntary contribution and called upon all countries to support the objectives reflected in the Draft International Convention on Digital Solidarity.

III. Innovative development financing initiatives under development

40. The widening interest and growing experience in pursuing the innovative sources of financing framework are highlighting three aspects that are important to the future of this novel approach of international development cooperation.

41. First, the exploration of this framework has uncovered the potential of innovative approaches to spending for development, now running in parallel to innovations in raising financing. In the case of support for the provision of vaccines, the intervention permits market inefficiencies to be addressed in a way that also overcomes the constraints posed by income differences across countries. The application of the framework to respond to other challenges, such as climate change, is promising because the same kind of gaps in terms of market weaknesses and differential capabilities are involved.

42. Second, there is the challenge acknowledged by all countries and other parties deeply involved in the framework of scaling up these mechanisms and spreading them to other areas. Innovative sources of financing can generate more funding for development, based on shared goals and a mode of international cooperation that has no historical precedent. Finding ways to spread and scale up these activities will require the application of both technical expertise and greater political effort.

43. Third, there is a need to strengthen coordination efforts and communications activities among existing mechanisms to enhance each of them individually and build a growing consensus on the approach. The experience of the last few years demonstrates the power of individual ideas being developed into implementable proposals under the overall framework. Improving visibility will intensify these efforts.

44. Expanding the number of actors involved in the framework is currently an important priority. A variety of proposals for voluntary contributions at the point of payment are being pursued. A concrete idea is the contribution of $1 on web pages that provide reservations for hotels, air tickets, and other purchases through the Internet. This idea will be realized through the implementation of creative finance mechanisms, like the Millennium Foundation's voluntary solidarity contribution, which will give millions more the opportunity to give by opting for a contribution of $2 whenever they purchase airline tickets.

45. There is a large array of innovative financing proposals, but they seem to differ markedly in the amount of political support they generate. The task now is to identify the most useful and realistic ones in terms of quick implementation and revenue generation, and concentrate international attention and efforts on their development into concrete practical undertakings. Reflecting the growing consensus, the report of the High-level Panel on Financing for Development (see A/55/1000) commissioned by the Secretary-General prior to the Monterrey Conference noted in 2001 that innovative sources of finance could include a currency transaction tax, a carbon tax, resuming special drawing right allocations,

and/or establishing an international tax organization and these ideas could indeed serve as guideposts for defining the scope of near-term priorities in this area.

46. *Currency transaction tax*. This tax is the conceptual successor to the Tobin tax first proposed in the 1970s as a means of reducing the volatility of capital flows across borders to minimize the threat of exchange rate crises. The two are identical in terms of tax base and tax collection mechanisms, but differ by purpose and proposed rate. If the Tobin tax rate needed to be high enough to influence foreign exchange market behaviour, the currency transaction tax rate would be at a miniscule level to raise money without disrupting market transactions. Estimates of revenue from a currency transaction tax differ widely because of differences in proposed tax rates and range from $24-$300 billion per year. As the volume of international transactions is immense, at an estimated $1 trillion per day, a very small levy on foreign exchange transactions still could raise billions, without affecting markets. For instance, a coordinated 0.005 per cent tax on all the major currencies is estimated to raise at least $33 billion every year. More importantly, it would widen the dealer spread by only one basis point and reduce transaction volume by 14 per cent, which would be well within the recent range of transaction volume variability and would not be disruptive of the world foreign exchange markets. It has been estimated that such a tax levied only on the United States dollar transactions against all other currencies would yield annual revenues of $28.4 billion. A coordinated tax on just the euro and the British pound together would yield $16.5 billion, while a tax just on the euro would yield €12.3 billion.

47. Thus, the currency transaction tax is a promising source of independent and stable finance for development and the Leading Group has been pursuing this project since its establishment as an economically viable and technically feasible financing mechanism, and as stated at the Paris International Conference on Solidarity and Globalization by Jacques Chirac, former President of the French Republic: "using a fraction of the new wealth created by the globalization process, a large part of which escapes States' taxation". There is great potential to use such a tax with a broad global base for global needs such as mitigation of climate change and key international development projects.

48. *Carbon taxes*. Carbon taxes not only help to reduce carbon emissions but also generate a flow of revenues that could complement ODA, both multilateral and bilateral, as well as global funds to deal with the urgent challenges of climate change, conflict, and HIV/AIDS. Depending on the tax rate, these taxes have the potential to raise revenue in support of development, estimated up to $75 billion each year, although a major part may have to assist affected workers and industries to mitigate the costs involved in reducing their carbon emissions. For instance, according to a Swiss Government proposal, a $2 per ton levy on carbon dioxide would raise about $48 billion per year, but given the high returns in taking action now on these "global bads", a higher levy could provide a timely market signal to encourage a faster rate of innovation and adoption of clean technologies.

49. Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway introduced carbon taxes in the 1990s. The European Union considered a carbon tax covering member States prior to starting its emission trading scheme in 2005 and Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada have been considering similar taxes. The IMF has recently proposed a uniform global tax on carbon dioxide as the most efficient way for managing climate change, in preference over direct

regulation or performance standards. According to IMF calculations, if all countries introduce such a tax in 2013, the carbon price would reach $86 per ton by 2040, corresponding to a $0.27 increase in the price of a gallon of gasoline over current levels, and a yield of $71/ton of carbon dioxide tax revenue. Projected aggregate revenues from such charges on carbon emissions range from an insignificant 0.1 per cent in 2020 to more than 3 per cent of world GDP in 2060. The disadvantage of a global approach is that poorer countries will be taxed at several times the rate of developed countries, as a proportion of their GDP, therefore, at a minimum, cross-border financial transfers will be needed to assist developing countries with adjustment under this scenario. A uniform global taxation scheme could also impose hardships on low-income households, whose coping strategies to higher market prices could increase environmental damage. As a climate mitigation and fiscal tool, carbon taxes would be most suitable for implementation in mature economies.

50. An international carbon tax, agreed on environmental grounds and structured to properly embody the principle of differentiated responsibilities based on capability, could, for the purpose of financing climate change adaptation and mitigation, build on the dynamics that were launched by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Climate Change Conference held at Bali in 2007 as well as the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen in 2009.

51. *Reducing emission from deforestation in developing countries*. The United Nations, with financial support from Norway, has launched a plan for countries with tropical forests to issue tradable carbon credits obtained from the saving and planting of trees. Buyers would be those countries seeking to meet their own carbon emission limits. Since it is estimated that deforestation accounts for 20 per cent of the greenhouse gases responsible for climate change, the financing flows could be significant especially for Africa and Indonesia, where endangered tropical forests are located. It is estimated that the flow to all participating countries could amount to $1 billion a year. An alternative proposal, coming from the United Kingdom, is to make payments to tropical countries based on the size of their forests. Irrespective of what scheme eventually comes to pass, the trend is clear: increasing linkages between climate change interventions and flows of development finance over the next decade.

52. *Special drawing rights*. Resuming allocations of special drawing rights (SDRs), which were initially created as a new international reserve asset managed by IMF, to provide global liquidity and stable international reserve assets has come to the fore in the multilateral response to the current global crisis. In April 2009, the Group of 20 countries called on IMF to issue the equivalent of $250 billion in new SDRs to be allocated in proportion to existing IMF quotas.

53. From a purely technical point of view, new SDR allocations would not involve direct costs to developed countries. For this reason, among others, their potential use for development purposes has been on the agenda as early as the Brandt Commission report in 1970. However, the proposed Fourth Amendment of the Fund's Articles of Agreement submitted in 1997, which would have doubled cumulative SDR allocations to SDR 42.8 billion, has not been implemented despite endorsement by 111 IMF member countries, because the required 85 per cent to put the amendment into effect was not reached.

54. Research suggests that the use of SDRs for supplementing aid and providing global public goods would not compromise international stability; in fact, the pattern of recent years suggested that a decreased dependence on the currency of one country as a unit of account and to provide global liquidity could actually improve systemic stability. New SDRs could be directed primarily at the heavily indebted countries to permit them to reduce their debt burdens independent of creditor conditionality.

55. More formalized ways of using SDR allocations for development finance and counter-cyclical activity for international stabilization, including allocating more SDRs for underrepresented members in the immediate period could contribute to the ongoing governance reform of the IMF functions. As an illustration, an annual issue of SDRs, at an upper limit of 10 per cent of combined quotas would yield SDR 20 billion and, if used for development finance, with developed countries donating their share, would yield about $25-$30 billion additional development finance.

56. *International tax cooperation*. At a seminar held on 28 May 2009 in Paris by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on innovative financing perspectives in the new global economic outlook, its Secretary-General, Angel Gurria, stated that "innovative finance should contribute to build up the capacity of tax administrations in developing countries; this is the 'new frontier' in development policy". Recent OECD work on combating global tax evasion will play a part in helping these countries counter the use of tax havens to diminish their revenue gap. It is difficult to measure the impact of more transparent taxing regimes on developing economies, but some non-governmental organizations estimate that it could be between $50 and $250 billion a year. Strengthened international tax cooperation should form a critical element of a more effective global system of financial regulation. In the outcome document of the conference, the Doha Declaration, Governments specifically requested the Economic and Social Council to examine the strengthening of existing institutional arrangements, including the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. This United Nations activity is helping developing countries to mobilize public revenues by enhancing international cooperation in areas such as combating tax evasion, and strengthening tax administration and taxation of services and natural resource use. Strengthening its capacity and status would serve to enhance international cooperation on tax matters and would be complementary to the additional commitment made by Governments to enhance tax revenues through modernized tax systems, more efficient tax collection, a broader tax base and effectively combating tax evasion. Enhancing consensus on standards of cooperation in international tax matters is best generated in universal forums such as in the United Nations. The participation at such a policymaking level by ministers of finance is critical in this regard and consideration should be given to establishing an intergovernmental commission for the coordination of standard setting in tax cooperation as recently suggested by the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System.

57. Innovative financing mechanisms have demonstrated their strong potential to complement traditional development aid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, even though the quantitative impact has been limited, having raised about $2.5 billion in additional funding since 2006. Thus, there exists a genuine need to

scale up innovative financing as a complementary, more stable and predictable source of development finance, as the Leading Group stressed at their sixth plenary meeting in Paris, on 28 and 29 May 2009.

58. The time has come to build upon the wealth of experience of existing innovative financing mechanisms and to expand their role in the global aid architecture in general and their developmental impact on the ground. The Secretary-General's Special Adviser's work with the newly created 1-8 Group/L.I.F.E. involving the major existing mechanisms with a view to sharing best practices, reinforcing and coordinating current efforts and galvanizing public support for further new initiatives, will be important in this respect.

59. Innovative financing is an important element in the complex and evolving development assistance architecture that has become highly pluralistic and eclectic in recent years, including global funds and programmes, foundations, non-governmental organizations, public-private partnerships and philanthropic and voluntary contributions, as well as emerging donors. It is therefore critical to ensure adequate transparency, accountability and effectiveness of increased resources and their use due to innovative financing projects in line with efforts to reform the international aid architecture.

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Advancement of women

Improvement of the situation of women in rural areas

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/136, reviews the activities undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to empower rural women and improve their situation and contains recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/136 on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General report on the implementation of that resolution, addressing different aspects of the empowerment of rural women. In response to that request, the present report summarizes actions taken by Member States[1] and United Nations entities[2] to improve the situation of rural women and support their empowerment. The report contains recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.

II. Background

2. Despite the increasing extent and importance of urban areas, more than half of the world's population, including the overwhelming majority of poor women and men, live in rural areas.[3] Around 56 per cent of the population in the less developed countries and 72 per cent of the population in the least developed countries live in rural areas.[4]

3. Rural areas in most regions of the world are furthest from achieving the Millennium Development Goals.[5] At the 2008 high-level segment thematic debate of the Economic and Social Council on rural development it was recognized that investment in sustainable land management and agriculture in developing countries has been neglected for decades. Only 4 per cent of global official development assistance (ODA) is directed to agriculture, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, total Government spending on farming is also just 4 per cent.[6]

4. Women play a significant role in remunerated and non-remunerated work in rural areas, however, despite their critical input in supplying a large proportion of the agricultural labour in many parts of the world, in some cases producing up to 80 per cent of food crops,[7] women continue to have less access to financial, physical and social assets in comparison to men. They have less voice in public decision-

[1] Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bahrain, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Chile, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Greece, Jamaica, Japan, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Spain, the Slovak Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Yemen.

[2] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Human Rights Council, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Food Programme (WFP).

[3] Valdes, A. and Others (2009), "A profile of the rural poor", background paper for IFAD, *Rural Poverty Report 2009*, Rome.

[4] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008), *World Urbanization Prospects*, New York.

[5] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008), *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*, New York.

[6] Economic and Social Council, 2008 high-level segment, thematic debate on rural development, issues note for round table 2, "Harnessing the current boom in agricultural commodities for poverty eradication and sustainable development: the case of small-scale farmers".

[7] FAO (2007), "Women and Food Security", Rome.

making and fewer opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills.[8] In rural areas, some 200 million people, nearly 20 per cent of the world's poor, have insufficient access to land to sustain their livelihoods.[9] Women constitute up to 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force, but most do not own or control any land. Rural women own less than 10 per cent of property in the developed world, and 2 per cent in the developing world.[9] It is estimated that women in Africa receive less than 10 per cent of all credit going to small farmers and only 1 per cent of the total credit going to the agricultural sector.[10]

5. The current global environment poses significant challenges to the situation of rural women. The inequalities and discrimination faced by rural women are exacerbated by the confluence of crises: the financial and economic crisis, the threat of climate change, and the fuel and food crises. The recessionary environment is likely to increase existing gender inequalities because women tend to receive lower unemployment and social security benefits and incur increased responsibility for household caregiving. In times of crises, women also take on additional responsibilities to provide non-market substitutes for market goods that their families are no longer able to afford.[11] Owing to climate variability, agricultural production is expected to fall in both tropical and in most temperate regions, with a direct negative effect on agriculture where women represent a large part of the workforce.[12] Sharp increases in food and fuel prices over the past few years have eroded the purchasing power of poor households, especially female headed households, which are the poorest of all. The food and fuel crises have raised serious concerns about food insecurity and malnutrition in many countries, which threaten the well-being and health of poor rural women and their families.[13]

6. Given the central economic and social role of women in rural areas, policies that enhance gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial for rural development, poverty reduction and economic growth.[14] At the same time, policies and strategies on agricultural and rural development, poverty reduction and economic growth must give explicit attention to gender equality and the contributions, priorities and needs of rural women.

III. Attention to rural women in intergovernmental processes

7. Since 2007, international intergovernmental processes have addressed issues of relevance to rural women. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 (see resolution 61/295,

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[8] IFAD, FAO and the World Bank (2008), *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*, Washington, D.C.

[9] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Global Land Tool Network (2008), "Secure land rights for all", Nairobi.

[10] International Development Association (ODA) (2008), "Gender: Working Towards Greater Equality", Washington, D.C., World Bank.

[11] E/CN.5/2009/CRP.2.

[12] IFAD (2008), "Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty: meeting the challenge by delivering results: IFAD 2010-2012", Rome, Consultation on the eighth replenishment of IFAD's resources, second session, REPL.VIII/2/R.2.

[13] World Bank, FAO and IFAD (2009), Food, fuel and financial crises, International Expert Consultation Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook: from Knowledge to Action, 16 and 17 March 2009, Washington, D.C.

[14] See E/2009/72.

annex), recognized the human rights of the world's nearly 400 million indigenous peoples and called upon Member States to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination (see articles 21 and 22).

8. In 2008, the outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (resolution 63/239, annex) recognized the necessity for a financial infrastructure that provides access to a variety of sustainable products and services for micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses, with particular emphasis on women, rural populations and the poor. The need for increased resources to provide universal access to basic economic and social infrastructure and inclusive social services, including capacity-building, placing special attention on women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities in order to enhance their social protection, was also recognized.

9. The General Assembly has addressed the situation of rural women in a number of other resolutions, in which it has emphasized the extreme vulnerability of this group as a result of the global economic downturn and stressed the importance of sound gender-sensitive agricultural policies and strategies. In order to accelerate progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in its resolution 62/206 the Assembly urged multilateral donors and international financial institutions to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular in rural and remote areas.

10. In its resolution 62/190, the General Assembly reaffirmed that agriculture plays a crucial role in addressing the needs of a growing global population and that it is inextricably linked to poverty eradication, especially in developing countries, and called for an enhanced role for women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, agriculture, nutrition and food security. The importance of sustainable and gender-sensitive agricultural policies as tools for promoting land and agrarian reform, rural credit and insurance and technical assistance, as well as other measures to achieve food security and rural development, was recognized in Assembly resolution 63/187. In its resolution 63/229, the Assembly called upon Member States and the United Nations system to fully maximize the role of microfinance instruments, including microcredit for poverty eradication, in particular for the empowerment of women and rural populations.

11. In its resolutions 62/138, 62/140 and 63/158, the General Assembly called upon Member States and the United Nations system to strengthen the capacity of health systems to provide family planning, prenatal care, skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetric care and post-partum care to young women and girls, including those living in poverty and in underserved rural areas where obstetric fistula is common. Incentives to attract qualified health professionals to rural areas and provision of means of transportation to enable women and girls to access obstetric care were also called for.

12. The ministerial declaration of the 2008 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, entitled, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development", reiterated the urgency of accelerating progress in the implementation of the priorities for action in water, sanitation and human settlements and urged the adoption of gender-sensitive

policies and the implementation of laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land and water-use rights and promote legal security of tenure.

13. The agreed conclusions of the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2008), entitled, "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women", called for active labour market policies for the full participation of women in all international and national development and poverty eradication strategies and the creation of more and better jobs for women in both urban and rural areas. In the agreed conclusions of the fifty-third session of the Commission (2009), entitled, "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS", Governments and the United Nations system were urged to increase the availability, access to and use of critical public infrastructure, such as transportation, the provision of a safe, reliable and clean water supply, sanitation, energy, telecommunications and affordable housing programmes, in particular in poverty-stricken and rural areas. The Commission called for strengthening accessibility of public health care services and community-based health services specifically related to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, including for people with disabilities, and an increase in the number of professional health-care providers, especially in rural areas.

14. At its seventh session in 2008, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recognized the crucial role of indigenous women in developing mitigation and adaptation measures on climate change and recommended the development of mechanisms for indigenous peoples' participation, in particular indigenous women and youth, in all aspects of the international dialogue on climate change.[15] At its eighth session in 2009, the Permanent Forum called upon States to ensure the application of culturally relevant, gender-balanced and gender-based analysis as well as gender-responsive budgeting in all projects as critical elements of economic and social development. The Forum urged States to address the situation of indigenous peoples who are forced to migrate or are displaced by violent conflicts, with a particular focus on indigenous women.[16]

15. A number of other outcomes on rural development, poverty eradication and climate change, while highly relevant to the situation of rural women, did not give specific attention to their contributions, priorities and needs.[17]

16. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly established an annual International Day of Rural Women on 15 October, which was observed for the first time in 2008. Events were held at United Nations Headquarters and at national and regional levels. In his message, the Secretary-General urged all countries to put the needs of rural women at the top of the global agenda so as to pave the way for a more secure global future.[18]

[15] See E/2008/43-E/C.19/2008/13.

[16] See E/2009/43-E/C.19/2009/14.

[17] See resolution 63/152 and the declaration of the High-level Conference on World Food Security: The Challenge of Climate Change and Bioenergy, Rome, 3-5 June 2008.

[18] WomenWatch (2008), International Day of Rural Women, 15 October 2008: see http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/idrw/.

IV. Action at the national level

17. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/136, Member States have taken a number of measures to empower rural women and ensure that attention is given to their priorities, needs and contributions. United Nations entities continued to support these efforts at nation level.

18. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly urged Member States to promote consultation with and participation of rural women, including indigenous women and women with disabilities, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development programmes and strategies.

19. In a number of Member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Jamaica, Morocco and Trinidad and Tobago) rural women's organizations were involved in the drafting of national action plans on gender equality. In other countries, the situation of rural women was taken into account in gender equality policies and plans. The gender action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, called on the Agency for Gender Equality to develop a strategy to increase the number of rural women and Roma women in decision-making at the local level. The action plan for the advancement of women (2006-2010) of Burkina Faso defined a strategy to increase rural women's participation in decision-making bodies at all levels, including through strengthening opportunities for women candidates in rural areas.

20. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly urged Member States to integrate a gender perspective into the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of development policies and programmes, paying increased attention to the needs of rural women to ensure they benefit from policies and programmes.

21. Efforts to integrate gender perspectives into rural development policies were reported in a number of countries (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, the Slovak Republic and Spain). The Council of Ministers in Spain, adopted the Equal Opportunities Plan in the Rural Areas (2007-2013), which promotes the economic empowerment of women as one of its key objectives. In Chile, the Ministry of Agriculture created a Commission for Equal Opportunities within the ministry. Through its socio-economic and gender analysis programme, FAO assisted over 20 countries to develop gender-sensitive national action plans for the rural sector and trained nearly 4,500 development specialists in over 90 countries in mainstreaming gender perspectives in development programmes and projects. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promoted the incorporation of rural women's perspectives in economic policies in Central America, a region where women's presence in agro-industry for exports is considerable.

A. Promoting the participation of rural women in decision-making

22. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/136, urged Member States to pursue the political and socio-economic empowerment of rural women and support their full and equal participation in decision-making at all levels.

23. Although the critical role of rural women, in particular in community-level projects and local institutions, is increasingly recognized, rural women continue to

face constraints to their participation in decision-making processes.[19] Temporary quotas and the trend toward decentralization provide opportunities for increased participation of women in local decision-making and representation on community development groups, water user's associations and self-help groups.[20]

24. Member States reported on the status of women's representation in local government and on specific measures to strengthen the role of women in decision-making processes. For example, the Slovak Republic reported 20.7 per cent of mayors and magistrates at the local level are women. In 2006, 3,000 rural women were elected to the parish boards in Ecuador, the lowest level of local government. These women were organized in a national association that works to strengthen women's leadership and mainstream gender equality into local public policies. The Government of the Czech Republic, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization "Gender Studies", implemented an annual awareness-raising campaign aimed at achieving gender equality in local administrations, including small municipalities in rural areas.

25. Through information campaigns and training, China increased women's participation in village neighbourhood committees and increased the number of women elected as village chiefs. In Japan, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries established annual plans to promote the participation of women in decision-making processes. In 2008, it issued directives to agricultural organizations such as the National Chamber of Agriculture and the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives to promote women's participation in decision-making processes and structures.

26. In many countries, civil society organizations advocated increased participation of rural women in decision-making at all levels. For example, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan and the Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women promoted the participation of rural women in the development of legislation, and provided research and information on rural women's rights.

27. A number of initiatives to improve rural women's access to decision-making were reported by United Nations entities. UNFPA involved rural women and their civil society representatives as key stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes on sexual and reproductive health programmes and on ending all forms of violence against women. The Fund also advocated the involvement of rural women in decision-making at the family and community levels. WFP promoted leadership training for women and reported that 266,000 women held leadership positions in various food-related committees established in 2008. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) promoted the participation of women in management and leadership committees in all operations, including in rural camp settings and return areas, and provided training in leadership skills and women's rights education. In Nepal every household in refugee camps was allocated two voting rights, one for a woman and one for a man. As result, almost half the members of camp management committees were women.

[19] United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women (2008), *Women 2000 and beyond: Rural women in a changing world: Opportunities and challenges*, New York.

[20] Beall, J. (2005), Decentralizing Government and Centralizing Gender in Southern Africa: Lessons from the South African Experience, Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

B. Strengthening the economic empowerment of rural women

28. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/136, also urged Member States to expand non-agricultural employment opportunities for women, thus improving their working conditions and increasing their access to productive resources, ensuring that women's unpaid work and contributions to on-farm and off-farm production are recognized and promoting programmes to enable rural women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities.

29. Globally, women's participation in the labour force is around 40 per cent of all paid employment outside agriculture. There are, however, significant regional differences, particularly in rural areas.[21] Barriers to equal access to non-agricultural employment for rural women include the lack of adequate education, transportation facilities and child-care services, as well as constraints imposed by their unequal care and household responsibilities. Socio-cultural attitudes can be especially restrictive for women in small and remote villages, particularly widows and wives of migrant workers.[22]

30. The promotion of non-agricultural employment for women is critical for ensuring sustainable livelihoods and food security in rural areas. A number of Member States have taken measures to enhance women's access to microfinance, including microcredit (Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Malawi, Spain, Turkey and Uzbekistan). For example, China and Spain have promoted microcredit and management training projects to support rural women in starting their own businesses and Brazil has allocated credits to 58,000 rural women workers for the period from 2008 to 2011. The fund "Forum of culture and art" in Uzbekistan has established a programme to support small businesses run by women farmers and provided grants to 60 women entrepreneurs. In Turkey, financial support has also been offered to cooperatives in rural areas, giving priority to those whose members are women or to families headed by women. IOM has implemented a small business training and microcredit revolving fund for land mine survivors in Azerbaijan, providing microcredit assistance to women who are family members of land mine victims.

31. Member States have taken other steps to enhance women's economic activities. To address the constraints to women's employment posed by women's unequal responsibility for care-giving, Greece has organized seasonal kindergartens during the peak periods of rural activities. In Serbia, UNDP has supported a project on women and rural development, which resulted in the creation of a database of successful individuals and groups in small-scale economic activities in rural areas.

32. A number of Member States took steps to promote the marketing of the products of women entrepreneurs and to ensure the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in agricultural and trade fairs (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, El Salvador, Greece and Malawi). Support for the marketing and promotion of women's production of handmade traditional costumes, honey products and

[21] 2008 high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals, background note by the Secretary-General, New York.

[22] Alimdjanova, D. (2009), "Gender aspects of agricultural and rural employment: application for Uzbekistan", workshop on gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty, Rome, FAO, IFAD, ILO, 31 March-2 April 2009.

traditional rugs was provided by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through its rural development fund and other microfinance institutions, rural women in Malawi have been provided with financial assistance and support in marketing their processed products.

33. In September 2008, Greece promoted the first national exhibition of traditional products from women cooperatives. The Government of Brazil supported the participation of women's organizations in national family agriculture and land reform fairs, with the result that women's participation in the fairs increased from 14 to 23 per cent. The guide for exhibitors, prepared by the Ministry of Agrarian Development, recommended that at least 30 per cent of enterprises should be owned or managed by women.

34. Initiatives were taken in a number of Member States to address the constraints faced by rural women in terms of their unequal access to resources and assets, including land, which are critical for their economic empowerment (Brazil, Burkina Faso and El Salvador). To guarantee the mandatory inclusion of both women and men in land registers, irrespective of their civil status, Brazil reformed the process of registration. The classification system for beneficiary families of land reform gives priority to female-headed households. In 2008, 920 rural women in El Salvador were provided with land certificates. In Burkina Faso, a national policy on land tenure security was established in rural areas to ensure land rights for both women and men.

35. Support to national efforts to increase land tenure security for rural women was also reported by United Nations entities. For example, in Tajikistan, UNIFEM and FAO trained 654 specialists from the land agency, the women's committee, non-governmental organizations and informal community groups active in rural areas on the gender perspective of land reform, contributed to the development of a gender-sensitive land reform strategy and issued the document "Using Human Rights Treaties to Protect Rural Women's Rights to Land".

36. Capacity-building on project development and management and resource mobilization are essential for rural women's economic empowerment. A number of Member States reported on capacity-building initiatives aiming at enhancing the economic opportunities for rural women (Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Jamaica, Japan, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic and Trinidad and Tobago). Training courses on processing technology and farm management were targeted at women farmers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan and Trinidad and Tobago. Formal education is another entry point for enhancing the role of rural women in the agricultural sector. The Russian Federation reported that 46.6 per cent of students in agricultural schools were women. In 2008, WFP facilitated the participation of 935,000 women in food-for-training activities on income generation.

37. Partnerships with civil society to enhance women's economic empowerment were also reported by Member States. The Slovak Republic worked with the Professional Rural Women's Association to support initiatives focused on employment and information networks in rural areas. Through a consultative process with rural women's organizations, Brazil developed culture- and race-sensitive guidelines to incorporate gender equality perspectives into land reform. Burkina Faso provided funds for the construction of women's centres in 45 provinces to create space for meetings and training opportunities. With the support of the African Development Bank, the Government provided bicycles and carts to enhance the mobility of rural

women. Through the Dimitra project, "Rural women and development", FAO facilitated the access of rural women's organizations to information and communications technology to enable them to establish partnerships with other civil society organizations to exchange information on a range of issues, including agriculture, health and education.

38. Initiatives were also taken to enhance women's entrepreneurship in rural areas through bilateral development cooperation programmes in a number of countries. Belgium contributed funding to the FAO programme on "Knowledge management and gender, 2009-2012", which focuses on the exchange and application of agricultural information in rural communities, including among women. The European Commission provided technical assistance on gender equality and entrepreneurship in rural areas in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

39. A number of publications related to rural women's economic empowerment were produced by United Nations entities. In 2008, IFAD published *Gender and non-timber forest products: promoting food security and economic empowerment*, a guide to creating opportunities for increased involvement of women in non-timber forest production. In 2009, IFAD, FAO and the World Bank published the *Gender in Agriculture* Sourcebook,[6] a comprehensive tool for policymaking to improve the livelihoods of women in poor rural communities. In 2009, a report by ECLAC and FAO on the employment of rural women in Latin America[23] analysed the patterns of integration of rural women into the labour force, and identified persistent constraints related to lack of quality employment opportunities for rural women.

C. Providing health-care services

40. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly addressed the specific health needs of rural women and called for concrete measures to enhance their access to the highest attainable standards of health for women in rural areas, including through sexual and reproductive health services such as pre- and post-natal health care, emergency obstetric care, family planning information and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

41. Reproductive health care remains inadequate in rural areas in many countries, with the presence of skilled birth attendants at births lower in rural than in urban areas in every region. Millennium Development Goal 5 is the goal where least progress has been made. According to WHO, less than two thirds of women in developing countries receive assistance from skilled health workers when giving birth.[24] Maternal mortality remains high in poor and rural areas, with the highest rates in sub-Saharan Africa.[25] The absence of health-care facilities at community level, lack of skilled staff at the primary-care level and the high cost of transportation and care are some of the main barriers that prevent rural women from enjoying good health, especially in developing countries.[19]

[23] Ballara, M. and S. Parada (2009), *El empleo de las mujeres rurales: Lo que dicen las cifras*, Rome, FAO and ECLAC.

[24] WHO (2008), fact sheet on maternal mortality, Geneva (WHO/MPS/08.12).

[25] UNFPA (2009), Safe motherhood: Skilled attendance at birth, *Population Issues*, New York (see http://www.unfpa.org/mothers/skilled_att.htm).

42. In many countries, women and adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS as a result of biological conditions, economic and social inequalities and discrimination and stereotypical attitudes and behaviours that place them in a subordinate position.[26] Women and girls are at increased risk of contracting HIV as a result of sexual violence, both inside and outside the home, and during armed conflict and its aftermath. In many countries, rural women and girls are disproportionately affected. Factors such as poverty, illiteracy and gender-based power imbalances within families and communities restrict women's access to preventive care, drugs and treatment.[27] Where women do not have legal rights to land and property, they face the loss of property and income when husbands die. As family members become ill, women take on increased farm and off-farm work as well as additional responsibilities for caregiving. Grandmothers often care for AIDS orphans when the children's parents become ill and die. Children, especially girls, may be taken out of school because of lack of resources and the need for additional labour.[28] The associated high costs are further aggravated by poor development of rural health infrastructure, which increases the vulnerability of poor rural women.[19]

43. Examples of measures taken to improve the provision of gender-sensitive health services in rural areas were reported. Some countries provided free public health services in rural areas (Cyprus, Malawi and Malta) and efforts were made to improve the health infrastructure and expand health facilities in rural areas (El Salvador, Jamaica, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam). In Viet Nam, a project on improving water, sanitation and health infrastructures sponsored by the World Bank and the Danish Government was implemented in four provinces in rural areas. UNDP supported Kyrgyzstan in implementing the project "First interactive e-health services in the Kyrgyz Republic" with the goal of expanding rural women's access to medical services through new information and communications technology.

44. Free access to reproductive health care was provided in a number of countries (Ecuador and Mexico). Mobile services in some countries provided comprehensive family planning programmes, including gynaecological examinations, pap smears and mammograms (Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Ecuador, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Yemen). Burkina Faso implemented a system of cost-sharing for delivery, obstetric and neonatal care to increase women's use of health services.

45. In recognition of the critical role of traditional midwives, Member States, with the support of United Nations entities, have created midwifery training centres. Through its national policy on health and sexual and reproductive rights, Ecuador allocated resources to enhance the role of traditional rural midwives. Mexico reported the certification of 558 traditional midwives during the period 2007-2008. In collaboration with the International Confederation of Midwives, UNFPA supported increased national investments in midwifery in more than 30 countries in order to create safer conditions for rural women before and during delivery.

46. Measures were taken in some countries to train medical staff to work in rural areas and to educate rural women on issues of reproductive health (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan and Turkey). In India, UNFPA supported the national rural

[26] E/CN.4/2004/66.

[27] E/CN.4/2005/72 and Corr.1.

[28] UNAIDS, Gender & AIDS; fact sheet on rural HIV (see http://data.unaids.org/Topics/Gender/ruralhivaids_en.pdf).

health mission in piloting innovative approaches on reproductive health with community involvement. WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank supported programmes on women's health in rural areas of Uzbekistan, focusing on safe pregnancy and strengthening the efficiency of prenatal assistance.

47. UNFPA continued to work with community and religious leaders, traditional birth attendants, radio stations, influential public figures and policymakers to increase awareness of the needs of women, particularly pregnant women, in rural areas, and to mobilize support for reproductive health and HIV prevention. Through its campaign to end fistula, UNFPA supported fistula survivors in 13 countries, empowering them to sensitize communities, provide peer support to women living with fistula and act as advocates for improved maternal health.

48. Awareness-raising measures to assist women infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, involving a range of stakeholders, were reported by some Member States (Burkina Faso, Czech Republic and Malawi). The Bureau of Women's Affairs of the Czech Republic promoted awareness-raising sessions on HIV/AIDS through a community outreach programme, benefiting 1,729 rural women. FAO undertook a series of HIV/AIDS communications campaigns, including through its Special Programme for Food Security, targeting vulnerable groups such as women and children in low-income food-deficit countries. WFP targeted pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls through awareness-raising on nutrition, health-care practices and HIV prevention. In South Africa, an IOM survey in Limpopo Province revealed that gender inequality was a major factor in HIV vulnerability among farm workers, in particular female employees under 30 years of age. UNHCR reported that women and men refugees had equal access to HIV/AIDS antiretroviral treatment in 85 per cent of its operations.

D. Eliminating violence against women in rural areas

49. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly also urged Member States and the United Nations system to create an environment in rural areas that does not tolerate violations of women's rights, including domestic violence, sexual violence and all other forms of gender-based violence.

50. Rural women are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse as a result of isolation and lack of social support; community attitudes that tolerate and legitimize male violence; economic dependence; and inaccessibility of law enforcement and protection services.[29] Access to services, such as women's shelters or domestic violence programmes that are far from rural communities is difficult or impossible for women when public transportation is limited or non-existent.[30]

51. A range of measures to eliminate violence against women, including targeted legislation, national strategies and support services, were reported but little information was provided on how these measures specifically addressed the

[29] FAO, "AIDS — a threat to rural Africa: rural women carry family burdens", *Focus* (http://www.fao.org/FOCUS/E/aids/aids3-e.htm).

[30] Chamberlain, L. (2002), Domestic Violence: A Primary Care Issue for Rural Women, "The Network News", Washington, D.C., National Women's Health Network.

priorities and needs of rural women. Some countries reported, however, on measures explicitly targeting rural women, including through legislation and programmes. The Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina established a multi-year (2009-2011) strategy focused on preventing and eliminating violence against women, including rural women. Morocco created a decentralized programme to end violence against women and girls that covers rural areas.

52. Member States reported measures to bring victim support services closer to rural women and to establish alliances with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide services for rural women victims of violence, including psychological, social and legal counselling and temporary shelters (El Salvador and Malawi).

53. Training on violence against women has been provided for health personnel. The General Directorate on the Status of Women and the Ministry of Health in Spain, for example, signed a protocol in 2008 to give in-service training to health personnel in providing primary, secondary and tertiary care services to women victims of violence, including rural women.

54. Awareness-raising programmes on the prevalence of violence against women were organized in local communities through social leaders, local councils, non-governmental organizations and local authorities (Jamaica, Spain and Yemen). In 2008, the Bureau of Women's Affairs of Jamaica conducted 22 workshops on gender-based violence, with 2,246 participants in rural communities, 77 per cent of whom were women. Workshops and discussions on the implementation of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belen do Para) were also organized for resident magistrates. In 2007, Spain distributed 300,000 awareness-raising brochures on violence against women in rural areas.

55. Factors such as race, ethnicity and class can exacerbate women's vulnerability to violence. Some countries have developed policies that explicitly take these factors into consideration. The Brazilian national pact to fight violence against women, launched in 2007, was the outcome of a participative process involving legislators and a consortium of eight non-governmental organizations. It gives special attention to black and indigenous women and to women in rural areas. The pact promoted the creation of the forum to draft policies to fight violence against women in rural and forest areas. The forum, which includes representatives from ministries, special secretariats and civil society organizations, spearheaded an awareness-raising media campaign on domestic violence.

56. Female genital mutilation remains a widespread practice in rural areas in many developing countries.[31] Member States, with the support of United Nations entities, have undertaken a number of measures to promote the elimination of this harmful practice.[32] Burkina Faso has implemented an action plan, "Zero tolerance for female genital mutilation 2008-2012", which incorporates advocacy activities on the rights of women, including those living in rural and remote areas. In 2008, WHO has coordinated the publication of an inter-agency statement on the elimination of female genital mutilation, signed by 10 United Nation agencies, which calls upon

[31] UNFPA and others (2008), *Eliminating female genital mutilation: an inter-agency statement*, Geneva, WHO.

[32] WHO (2008), "Female genital mutilation", Fact sheet No. 241.

Member States to prevent female genital mutilation; to promote its abandonment; to respond to its consequences; to hold those who perpetrate it criminally responsible for inflicting harm on girls and women; to support and enhance community-based efforts; and to develop and promote guidelines for care of victims.

57. Other initiatives by United Nations entities to support efforts at the national level to eliminate violence against rural women were reported. WFP provided food rations to hospitalized victims of sexual abuse and through its food-for-training and food-for-work programmes it supported rural women survivors to become economically independent. UNFPA provided support to Governments, including through technical assistance, advocacy and capacity development, on prevention and response to violence against women living in both rural and urban areas. UNFPA issued a strategy and framework of action for addressing gender-based violence: 2008-2011. IOM supported Member States in promoting safe migration for women in rural areas. In Viet Nam, an IOM-supported vocational training centre offered training to women from rural areas at high risk of being trafficked. Two of the centres facilitated the return and reintegration of victims of trafficking, including rural women.

E. Meeting the needs of women in vulnerable situations

1. Rural women with disabilities

58. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly also called upon Member States and United Nations entities to promote consultation with, and participation of, women with disabilities living in rural areas, through their organizations and networks, in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development programmes and strategies.

59. Most women with disabilities in rural areas in developing countries face substantial barriers to independent living, including vulnerability to poverty and social isolation, limited access to employment and productive resources and lack of access to adequate health-care infrastructure and other services, including transportation.[33]

60. Member States reported on specific measures to address the situation of women with disabilities. Japan promoted a "farms for liveable lives" initiative and applied barrier-free design to agricultural facilities. In 2007-2008, Spain took specific measures to enhance rural women's participation in the labour market, with a focus on those over 45 years of age, women with disabilities and women without formal education. In the Czech Republic, the adoption of the act on social services in 2007 was intended to enhance the quality of social services and make them accessible to all people with disabilities, irrespective of where they live. WHO reported on the development of technical guidelines on community-based rehabilitation to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities, with a specific focus on women and girls.

[33] Rousso, H. (2003), "Education for All: a gender and disability perspective", background paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report: The Leap to Equality*, Paris, UNESCO.

2. Indigenous women

61. In recognition of the critical role of indigenous women in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty, in its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly called upon Member States and United Nations entities to ensure that the perspectives of indigenous women are taken into account and that they participate in the design, development and implementation of gender equality and rural development programmes and strategies.

62. Indigenous women often face multiple discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and gender.[34] In many rural areas, indigenous women depend on access to natural resources, and the depletion of ecosystems has thus had a profound impact on their livelihoods. It is important to recognize that indigenous women play a critical role in rural development, in particular in the sustainable management of resources and the preservation of biological diversity. It is also important to promote their full participation at all levels of decision-making.[35]

63. A range of measures have been undertaken at the national level to protect indigenous women's rights. In Mexico, for example, the National pro-gender equality programme 2007-2012 includes a commitment to reduce inequalities faced by indigenous women. The League of Displaced Women in Colombia, an organization of 300 Afro-Colombian and indigenous women, with the support of UNHCR, sought restitution for human rights violations. UNIFEM's regional programme "Working against ethnic and gender-based discrimination: for the effective exercise of Latin American indigenous women's rights", supported three pilot initiatives to improve indigenous women's access to justice. In Ecuador, UNIFEM supported the reform of the ancestral indigenous justice system in 43 Kichwa communities to strengthen women's rights and eliminate violence and economic discrimination against them. UNIFEM supported indigenous women's associations in Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Suriname to advocate for land rights.

64. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) gave awards to two outstanding health projects on domestic violence and culturally appropriate care for indigenous women. IOM, through its projects in Costa Rica, Panama and Viet Nam, actively supported the empowerment of indigenous women, promoted their access to health services and training programmes on women's rights and enhanced the organization of indigenous women.

65. UNFPA contributed to the strengthening of indigenous and ethnic minority organizations and networks in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Panama and Viet Nam. The Fund supported the Women's Union and the Farmers' Union, two key organizations active in ethnic minority regions in Viet Nam, to integrate health education activities into income-generating initiatives. UNFPA also worked with the Ministry of Health in Mexico to develop strategies for the empowerment of indigenous women. In Panama, UNFPA facilitated the participation of the national coordinator for indigenous women

[34] ILO (2007), "Indigenous women overcome multiple obstacles", Geneva.

[35] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007), Indigenous Women and the United Nations system: good practices and lessons learned, New York.

(coordinadora de mujeres indígenas de Panamá) and the Ngöbe Women's Association in organizing the first International Forum of Indigenous Women.

3. Older rural women

66. In its resolution 62/136, the General Assembly also called upon Member States and United Nations entities to ensure that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account with regard to their equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection/social security measures and economic resources, as well as their empowerment through access to financial services and infrastructure.

67. Many older women in developing countries live in extreme poverty and exclusion, especially in rural areas. Poor economic and health conditions, changes in traditional family support structures and elder-abuse increase the vulnerability of women. In many countries, older women increasingly act as caregivers for their adult children infected with HIV/AIDS as well as for their orphaned grandchildren, despite the fact that they often face extreme poverty, isolation and abandonment.[36]

68. Social protection initiatives, such as cash transfers and agricultural input subsidy programmes targeted at older, vulnerable people, including women in the rural areas, were undertaken in some countries (Jamaica, Japan and Malawi). The National Council for Senior Citizens in Jamaica, for example, organized annual awareness-raising programmes specifically targeted at older women in rural areas. In order to secure a safe living environment for elderly women in rural areas, Japan distributed information on the national farmers' pension scheme and provided health-care services in rural villages.

69. UNFPA advocated the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, with a focus on promoting the quality of life of older persons, including women in rural areas. UNHCR introduced an "Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming" strategy to promote meaningful participation of women and men, including those based in and/or originating from rural areas, into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its programmes and operations.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

70. **Member States and United Nations entities have taken measures to improve the situation of rural women with regard to their participation in public life, opportunities for employment, access to and control over productive resources and access to health facilities and services for victims of violence. The needs, priorities and contributions of rural women continue, however, to be insufficiently addressed. Rural women's knowledge, experience and contributions should be taken into consideration in research, data collection, policy development, resource allocation and programmes in all areas of sustainable development.**

71. **The persistent inequalities and discrimination faced by rural women pose significant challenges to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The adverse**

[36] UNFPA (2002), *Situations and voices: The Older Poor and Excluded in South Africa and India*, Population and Development Strategies Series, No. 2, New York.

impacts of the current multiple global crises (food and energy crises, climate change and economic and financial crises), affect rural women, particularly poor women, disproportionately. While there is a growing recognition that rural women, including indigenous women, can be critical agents in the adaptation and mitigation responses to current crises, little has been done to mobilize and empower them to contribute effectively.

72. **The improvement of the situation of rural women requires the promotion of non-agricultural employment and full access to productive resources. Other critical elements include strengthening the responsiveness of the public health system to the needs of rural women and enhanced measures to prevent violence against women and support victims/survivors. Adequate responses to the current crises require both short-term action to reduce immediate vulnerabilities of rural women and long-term measures to promote gender-sensitive rural development policies that contribute to the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment and sustainable development.**

73. **Governments, United Nations entities and all other relevant stakeholders should support legislation, policies and programmes that strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in rural areas. Specific interventions could include actions to:**

(a) **Ensure systematic attention to rural women's needs, priorities and contributions, including through enhanced consultation and full participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of both gender equality policies and action plans and rural development policies and programmes, including agricultural policies and poverty reduction strategies;**

(b) **Adopt appropriate measures to identify and address the negative impacts of the current global crises (food and energy, climate change and financial and economic crises) on women in rural areas;**

(c) **Design stimulus packages in response to the financial and economic crisis that provide gender-sensitive investments in both physical and social infrastructure and in employment opportunities, taking into account the specific needs, priorities and contributions of rural women;**

(d) **Promote rural women's participation in decision-making at all levels, including through temporary special measures, and support policies and mechanisms that create an enabling environment for rural women's organizations and networks, including self-help groups, workers' organizations and cooperatives;**

(e) **Integrate the creation of non-agricultural employment opportunities for rural women into all national development strategies and poverty eradication strategies and increase women's access to financial resources, including credit;**

(f) **Strengthen efforts to protect the rights of and ensure decent work conditions for rural women workers in relation to, inter alia, working hours, conditions and wages, access to health-care services, childcare and breastfeeding facilities, and other social and economic benefits;**

(g) **Develop and expand the provision of quality and affordable public health-care services for rural areas, including sexual and reproductive health**

services, and ensure coverage of all women throughout the life cycle, particularly those living in poverty and in underserved rural areas, including older women, indigenous women and women living with disabilities and with HIV/AIDS;

(h) Strengthen measures, including increased financial resources, to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5 on improving maternal health through increasing access in rural areas to quality and affordable prenatal care, obstetric care, skilled birth attendants and post-partum care;

(i) Intensify measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against rural women, including the implementation of laws, the prosecution of perpetrators, the provision of services, and the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns;

(j) Promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, including by ensuring their equal access to productive employment and decent work, economic and financial resources and disability-sensitive infrastructure and services, in particular in relation to health and education, as well as by ensuring that their priorities and needs are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, inter alia, through their participation in decision-making processes;

(k) Ensure that the rights of older women in rural areas are taken into account, including in relation to equal access to basic social services, appropriate social protection measures, and economic and financial resources;

(l) Promote legislative reforms to eliminate laws and practices that discriminate against indigenous women, including with regard to their access to and control over productive and economic resources and participation in decision-making processes;

(m) Increase the capacity of personnel working with national development strategies, rural development, agricultural development, poverty eradication and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to identify and address the challenges and constraints facing rural women, including through training programmes and the development and dissemination of methodologies and tools;

(n) Improve monitoring of the impact of policies and programmes on women in rural areas, including through research and the systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data;

(o) Ensure that the empowerment of rural women, including indigenous women, is addressed during the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2010, and the 2010 annual ministerial review of the ECOSOC/Development Cooperation Forum focused on "Implementing the internationally agreed development goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women".

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General Assembly

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Sixty-fourth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization

Letter dated 14 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On the basis of rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour, on behalf of the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, to request the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory note (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached hereto.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

(E) 130809

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Annex I

Explanatory note

1. At the current stage in the development of international relations, the interrelationship between members of the international community is becoming closer and the political significance of the regional and subregional organizations of States is growing. This process is particularly manifest in such key areas as cooperation in the field of military and political security and of an adequate collective response to new challenges and threats, including, above all, international terrorism and extremism, illegal trafficking in narcotics and arms and organized transnational crime. In all of these areas, there is close interlinkage between the efforts of the United Nations and of inter-State organizations, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

2. The member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization include Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The purposes of the organization, which became a regional international organization with the entry into force of its charter on 18 September 2003 and which was registered with the United Nations Secretariat on 16 December of that year, are to strengthen peace and international and regional security and stability and to protect on a collective basis the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of its member States. Priority in the attainment of these objectives is assigned by the member States to political means in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the universally accepted norms of international law. The organization possesses all the necessary mechanisms for active participation in the efforts of the international community to strengthen peace and international security.

3. The Collective Security Treaty Organization has had observer status in the General Assembly since 2004. Its secretariat has established contacts with the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council and its Executive Directorate. In 2006, the organization was included in the composition of the United Nations standing committee on coordination of the activity of regional and other intergovernmental organizations.

4. The entry into force of the agreement on peacekeeping activity of the Collective Security Treaty (signed on 6 October 2007 at a session of the Collective Security Council and currently ratified by four of the States members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization) took place on 16 January 2009. The machinery that is taking shape for peacekeeping activity presupposes the possibility of its use in peacekeeping operations, including those under United Nation auspices.

5. The results of the activity of the Collective Security Treaty Organization justify speaking about the real potential of its cooperation with the universal international organization on the basis of the principles of partnership, joint participation and complementarity of efforts, particularly in combating drug trafficking from Afghanistan.

6. We believe that in order to achieve the most effective level of cooperation and interaction between the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the United Nations, the interrelationship between them should be intensified on a regular and orderly basis. This objective would be served by the adoption by the General

Assembly of a resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the organization. That would permit a real strengthening of interaction between the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the United Nations, expand their mutual capabilities and promote the safeguarding of peace, security and cooperation at the regional and global levels.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization

The General Assembly,

Referring to its resolution 59/50 of 2 December 2004, in which it accorded the Collective Security Treaty Organization observer status in the General Assembly,

Referring also to the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations which encourage measures for regional cooperation to advance the purposes and principles of the United Nations,

Welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization to strengthen the role of that organization in the attainment of objectives consistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Referring to Security Council resolution 1631 (2005) of 17 October 2005, in which the Security Council calls on regional organizations to improve coordination with the United Nations, and to the Declarations of the General Assembly of 9 December 1994 and 17 February 1995, on the strengthening and improvement of maintaining cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in international peace and security,

Emphasizing that the growing contribution by regional organizations to cooperation with the United Nations can usefully supplement the Organization's activity for the maintenance of international peace and security,

1. *Takes note* of the activity of the Collective Security Treaty Organization for the development of regional cooperation in such areas as the strengthening of regional security and stability, peacemaking, counter-terrorism, combating illegal trafficking in narcotics and arms, countering organized transnational crime and human trafficking and combating natural and man-made disasters, which contributes to the attainment of the purposes and principles at the United Nations;

2. *Notes* the importance of strengthening dialogue, cooperation and coordination between the United Nations system and the Collective Security Treaty Organization and invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to engage, to this end, in regular consultations with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, utilizing for this purpose the appropriate inter-institutional forums and formats, including the annual consultations between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of regional organizations;

3. *Invites* the specialized components of the United Nations system, such as the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, to cooperate with the Collective Security Treaty Organization and develop direct contacts with it for the joint implementation of programmes aimed at the attainment of their objectives;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fifth session a sub-item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Collective Security Treaty Organization".

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General Assembly

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Sixty-fourth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session

Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Letter dated 14 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you on behalf of the Russian Federation, as well as the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, with a request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to include in the provisional agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly a supplementary item entitled "The sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War" to be considered by the General Assembly in plenary session.

In conformity with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory note (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached to this letter.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Annex I

Explanatory note

In 2010 the world will commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the victory over fascism. The great victory in the Second World War was achieved through the efforts of many countries. That war proved to be the greatest tragedy to afflict the peoples of Europe and the world. Through the suffering and death of millions of people, the world community came to realize the indispensability of a system of collective security and the necessity of establishing reliable machinery to ensure international peace.

The burning desire to spare humanity forever from the miseries of war served as the basis for the founding of the United Nations, whose Charter has come to serve as the code of conduct for States and international organizations and the generally recognized foundation for the building of a new world order and the system of international law.

It is important today to bear in mind the lessons of the Second World War, to hold sacred the memory of the fallen and to work to promote the preservation of the historical memory of peoples. The meaning of the victory won in the Second World War is especially significant today, when the international community needs to join forces to address global challenges and threats, such as international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and transnational organized crime.

The memory of the victory over fascism is also of current relevance in view of the increasing attempts to rewrite history and revise the conclusions to be drawn from the Second World War and the Nuremberg Tribunal. The rise of neo-fascist and neo-Nazi ideologies and organizations and the growth of aggressive nationalism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia make it necessary for the United Nations to oppose crimes based on race, nationality and ethnic origin and the spread of intolerance and related forms of racial discrimination.

The States Members of the United Nations must jointly take all possible measures to put an end through political means to present-day armed conflicts, prevent their emergence in the future and promote the joint efforts of the international community to combat new challenges and threats, with the United Nations playing the central role. That is why it is especially important to promote the improvement of United Nations machinery for preventing and resolving conflicts by peaceful means, strengthening the Organization's capacities in peacebuilding and the consolidation of peace, and promoting democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is in the direct interest of humanity to further strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations as the central element in the collective security system, inter alia, through a process of rational reform.

Consideration of this agenda item could lead to the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Second World War. This would make it possible to hold a solemn meeting of the General Assembly in memory of all victims of the war.

Annex II

Sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 59/26 of 22 November 2004, in which it, inter alia, declared 8 and 9 May as a time of remembrance and reconciliation,

Recalling that 2010 will mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a war which brought untold sorrow to mankind,

Stressing that this historic event established the conditions for the creation of the United Nations, designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,

Calling upon the States Members of the United Nations to unite their efforts in dealing with new challenges and threats, with the United Nations playing a central role, and to make every effort to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and in such a manner that international peace and security are not endangered,

Underlining the progress made since the end of the Second World War in overcoming its legacy and towards establishing reconciliation, international and regional cooperation and the promotion of democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular through the United Nations, and the establishment of regional organizations and other appropriate frameworks,

1. *Invites* all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and individuals to observe these days in an appropriate manner to pay tribute to all victims of the Second World War;

2. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to hold a special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in the second week of May 2010 in commemoration of all victims of the war;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system and to take measures necessary for its implementation.

United Nations A/64/193

General Assembly

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Sixty-fourth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session

Observer status for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa in the General Assembly

Note verbale dated 6 August 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General, and has the honour, in its capacity as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, to transmit the request for observer status for the organization in the General Assembly (see annex), which is addressed to the Secretary-General.

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Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 6 August 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

29 July 2009

On behalf of our respective Governments we have the honour, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to request the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa in the General Assembly".

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa is an international and intergovernmental organization whose main objective is to provide a comprehensive framework for cooperation and collaboration to end violence and resolve intractable conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. It also aims at encouraging and promoting concrete measures to contribute to sustainable peace and stability in the region, by developing collaborative structures and subsidiary institutions to enhance cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations and the regional economic communities such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), among others. The current Executive Secretary of the Conference is Ambassador Liberata Mulamula.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum on the nature and description of the organization (see annex I) and the relevant draft resolution (see annex II) are attached to this letter.

We should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Teodolinda Rodrigues **Coelho**
Chargé d' affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Angola

(*Signed*) Zacharie **Gahutu**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi

(*Signed*) Fernand **Poukré-Kono**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic

(*Signed*) Justin **Biaboroh-Iboro** for Raymond Serge **Balé**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo

(*Signed*) Mr. Atoki **Ileka**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the
Democratic Republic of the Congo

(*Signed*) Grace W. **Cerere**
Chargé d' affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya

(*Signed*) Eugène-Richard **Gasana**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda

(*Signed*) Hassan Hamid **Hassan**
Chargé d' affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Sudan

(*Signed*) Ruhakana **Rugunda**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda

(*Signed*) Augustine P. **Mahiga**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania

(*Signed*) Lazarus **Kapambwe**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

The decision to establish the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the 11 member States of the Great Lakes region. The intergovernmental organization comprises Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. The Conference has co-opted member States of Egypt, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Ethiopia.

The history of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region dates back to the first phase that began in 1999 and culminated in the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration by the Heads of State and Government at the initiative of the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan in close collaboration with the African Union in 2004. The phase represented the dialogue and consultations leading to the adoption of the Dar es Salaam Declaration in November 2004 by the respective Heads of State and Government.

The Dar es Salaam Declaration takes cognizance of the genesis of the genocide in Rwanda and the wars of the African nations of the 1990s, to raise awareness that conflicts in the Great Lakes region had a regional dimension. People in the Great Lakes region are inter-linked; hence instability in one country easily affects neighbours. The Heads of State and Government recognized the need to seek a regional approach for sustainable peace and development, addressing the root causes of problems and finding perspectives for joint and peaceful development in the region. The Dar es Salaam Declaration saw the need to achieve this through an innovative approach to complement the ongoing national peace initiatives.

The period 2005-2006 formed the second phase, which basically constituted the preparation, adoption, and signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in December 2006. The pact gives and provides a legal framework governing relations between the member States to implement the Dar es Salaam Declaration, the protocols, programmes of action, the regional follow-up mechanism and the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development, to create conditions for security, stability, and sustainable development in the region. The overall objective of the Pact revolves around four key thematic areas, namely:

1. Peace and security with its five projects and two protocols.
2. Democracy and good governance with its four projects and five protocols.
3. Economic development and regional integration with its fifteen projects and one protocol.
4. Humanitarian and social issues with its seven projects and three protocols.

In total the Pact has 33 projects and 10 regional protocols.

Member States also incorporated cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, environment, human settlement and HIV/AIDS, into the framework.

To ensure implementation of the Pact, a Regional Follow-up Mechanism consisting of the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee, the Conference Secretariat, the National Coordination Mechanism and other collaborative Mechanisms were put in place. The Regional Follow-up Mechanism is based upon the principles of best practice, complimentarity, linkages and collegial ownership by the Member States, in cooperation with the African Union and the United Nations and other partners.

The Summit is the supreme organ of the Conference and it is chaired on rotational basis by a Head of State or Government of a member State. It meets once every two years and can convene an extraordinary Summit at the request of member States or upon majority consent of at least eight of the ratifying member States present and voting.

The Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee is the executive organ of the Conference. It meets in ordinary session twice a year.

In order to fulfil its mandate more effectively, the Heads of State and Government under Article 26 established the Secretariat as the technical arm of the Conference. It is headed by the Executive Secretary. In implementing the Pact and the decisions of the Summit and the Inter-Ministerial Committee and reporting on it, the Secretariat is charged with the following core tasks:

- Coordinate and ensure the functions of the Regional Follow-up Mechanism.
- Mobilize resources from partners, private sector and civil society.
- Build and maintain partnerships.
- Reinforce institutional capacities.
- Ensure the visibility of the Conference Secretariat.

It also organizes meetings of the Summit, the Inter-Ministerial Committee and of the other Conference structures and forums in addition to harmonizing the implementation of the Conference activities, as well as the decentralized and affiliated institutions and drawing up of programmes of activities and the budget of the Conference Secretariat, and ensuring the implementation after approval by the Inter-Ministerial Committee.

The major objective of the Conference is to transform the Great Lakes region into a space for:

- Sustainable peace and security.
- Political and social stability.
- Shared growth and development.
- Cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region.

In order to fulfil these objectives, four cluster areas have been targeted as follows:

(a) Peace and security

(b) Democracy and good governance

(c) Economic development and regional integration

(d) Humanitarian and social issues

Apart from the above-mentioned thematic areas, the Conference also addresses cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, human rights, human settlements and HIV/AIDS.

The Conference Secretariat is located in Bujumbura, and maintains a liaison office in Nairobi, Kenya. It is headed by an Executive Secretary and employs 11 international staff from 10 countries among the member States and 11 national staff from Burundi. The Secretariat is funded by the member States who make annual payments according to agreed formula to cover its running costs and is supported by international development partners and works closely with regional and international consultants. The Conference Secretariat has developed collaborative structures and subsidiary institutions by developing and promoting cooperation framework with the African Union, and the regional economic communities (CEMAC, CEPGL, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, IGAD and SADC).

Currently the Conference has observer status with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission for Burundi. It seeks to collaborate with the United Nations to strengthen and enhance its scope of interactions.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of Africa to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.